

Lim Yu Xin (18) 308

Cherishing the people around you

Have you ever secretly rolled your eyes behind your mother's back after being nagged by her, secretly wishing that she would shut up? Have you ever directed your anger at a friend when it was another person who had annoyed you?

Have you ever felt the pain of losing a loved one? Have you ever thanked the people around you for always being there? Have you ever openly cherished the people around you?

As the world progresses and the people get a better standard of life, teenagers like me often take things for granted. I think we do not feel the true hardship of life because our lives are already planned out for us, and instead perhaps think, "if I don't get an Iphone, I'm going to die." I guess we do not cherish the people around us – our family, our friends – as much as we ought to, because there is no "threat" that would take them away from us. I used to feel like this, until my aunt passed away last year.

My aunt was the one who took care of me when I was young, when my mother had to go to work. She would fetch me to and from the kindergarten everyday before and after school, and I would go to her house to play. She often bought us candies and chocolates, and secretly brought us out to MacDonald's without my parents knowing because she knew they would disapprove. She was a fun and lively person, always cheerful despite all the downfalls in life. Unfortunately, she was diagnosed with cancer in 2003, and although she went into remission, the illness came back full blast in 2008. Seeing her in pain, seeing her change from her lively self to being too weak to stand, seeing her gradually lose her consciousness of the things around her was really heartbreaking. However, due to my busy school schedule, I was not able to visit her often, even though her house was just a street away. The last time I saw her, she could barely move, and she did not respond to my words at all. Three days later, she passed away.

I felt really down for the two weeks after her death. Every night, memories from my childhood flooded my mind, keeping me from sleep. I felt guilty for not visiting her more often. After that, I felt that I had to cherish the people around me more, or somehow, they would just slip away quietly.

A writer and photographer of inspirational and motivational art, Michelle C. Ustaszkeski, once said, "Before someone's tomorrow has been taken away, cherish those you love, appreciate them today." Cherishing loved ones should be shown through your actions, to anyone and everyone who has played a part and perhaps made a difference in your life. I'm working towards it, working towards cherishing the people around me through my actions. I believe that this may make the world a better place.

(494 words)